

Outreach Education

Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park
Curecanti National Recreation Area

National Park Service



Grade 5 , Pre-Visit Activity, "Watersheds"

Name: _____

Vocabulary and Key Concepts

Erosion: the process by which material from the earth's surface is worn away by forces such as glaciers, wind, and waves

Gradient: how steep the slope of a road or river is; a 10% gradient is steeper than a 1% gradient

Meander: (noun) a winding bend of a river or road; (verb) to follow a winding course

Native Vegetation: plants that grow naturally in a certain place

Riparian Habitat: the area along the banks of a river

Runoff: rainfall that does not soak into the soil but flows into surface waters instead

Sediment: small particles of rock carried by water or wind and deposited on the land surface or bottom of a body of water

Watershed: an area or ridge of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers or lakes

Use the map on the back of this paper to answer these questions:

1. How many states does the Colorado River pass through on its way to the Gulf of California?

2. What is the name of the reservoir located on the Gunnison River?

3. What are the names of the two countries that the Colorado River travels through?

_____ and _____

Just for Fun: Visit the interactive map of the Colorado River basin located at this website:
<http://www.crwcd.org/media/maps/map2.htm>

THE RIVERS OF THE COLORADO BASIN



Answer key for the “Watersheds” pre-activity:

Use the map on the back of this paper to answer these questions:

How many states does the Colorado River pass through on its way to the Gulf of California? 5 states
(Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, California)

What is the name of the reservoir located on the Gunnison River? Blue Mesa Reservoir

What are the names of the two countries that the Colorado River travels through?
United States and Mexico

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Let's see what you learned!

1. Where does the water from the Gunnison River end up, after traveling through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and California? _____
2. Which river does the Gunnison River flow into in Western Colorado just before entering the state of Utah? _____
3. What is a watershed?
 - A. an area of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers
 - B. a building behind the school that has lots of water in it
 - C. rainfall that does not soak into the soil
4. What are 2 differences between a natural river and a man-made river?

5. Which river tends to meander more, a natural river or a man-made river?

6. What is one benefit of leaving natural vegetation alongside a river, instead of planting and mowing grass to the very edge of the river?

Answer Key to the “Watersheds” Post-Activity

1. Where does the water from the Gunnison River end up, after traveling through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, Nevada, and California? Either Mexico or Gulf of California are acceptable answers
2. Which river does the Gunnison River flow into in Western Colorado just before entering the state of Utah? Colorado River
3. What is a watershed? **A.** an area of land that separates waters flowing to different rivers
4. What are 2 differences between a natural river and a man-made river?
 - Man-made rivers tend to be straighter than natural rivers
 - Man-made rivers tend to have less native vegetation along the banks
 - Natural rivers have lots of native vegetation along the banks
 - Natural rivers meander, or curve, more than man-made rivers
 - Man-made rivers often pass through or near fields or ranches
 - Etc.
5. Which river tends to meander more, **a natural river** or a man-made river?
6. What is one benefit of leaving natural vegetation alongside a river, instead of planting and mowing grass to the very edge of the river?
 - The vegetation has strong roots that prevent erosion.
 - The vegetation provides a home for small animals.
 - The vegetation provides shade, which may create better fishing habitat.